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MAURICE THE PHILOSOPHER

BY

HAROLD P. COOKE

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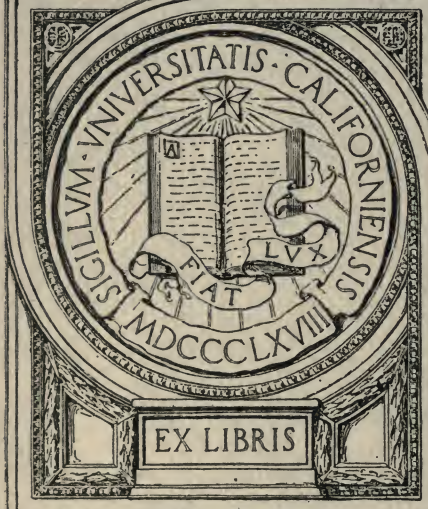

MAURICE, THE PHILOSOPHER

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Maurice, the Philosopher

(A DIALOGUE)

OR

Happiness, Love and the Good

HAROLD P. COOKE

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With an Introduction by

DR. F. C. S. SCHILLER

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INTRODUCTION.

Ought philosophy to be written in dialogue form? Dialogue is the form naturally appropriate to the discussion of questions, and inappropriate to the dictating of dogmas and the laying down of the law. To make the dialogue interesting the questions must of course be real questions, and not questions, which, as Aristotle remarked,* with that keen eye to the obvious which is believed (in Oxford) to render him such a salutary discipline for Passmen, any fool or madman might discuss. That is, they must not be merely rhetorical or academic, but questions to which it makes a difference whether we answer them one way or another, and whether we really try to answer them, or merely pretend to, and secretly shrink from them.

Fortunately philosophy is full of such questions, though most philosophers are afraid of them. They are so big and so oppressive, and it is so difficult even to make believe that they

* *Eth. Nic.*, iii. 3. 2.

can be conjured out of existence by the magic of technical verbiage. It needs therefore some courage to raise them, and much self-confidence to think that one has solved them.

For the real question is always relative to a real doubt. We do not ask questions about what we already know, nor discuss what is indisputable. That every well-conducted reasoning inevitably starts and ends with certainty is the pathetic delusion of Formal Logic, and is manifestly false. The fun, the zest, the motive and the meaning of all reasoning lie in seeing whether the conclusion, which we have "demonstrated," is actually going to come true.

The reason then why men never weary of arguing about the problems of philosophy is that they never wear out as questions. Their eternal youth never grows stale and staid and settled; their "solutions" ever remain "discoveries," potent to excite rapture in their authors, but never to be vulgarized by being shared with other minds and becoming common property for every-day use. So, generation after generation, we go on asking "What is happiness? what is satisfaction, and what perfection?"—much as we keep on asking "Is life worth living?" We hardly understand the terms of our questions; nor do we in our discussions mean the same

things by the same terms, being usually content to accept the identity of words as an adequate guarantee of identity of meaning. So we get no answer; but do our work and die, while the old questions rise up anew in their eternal freshness to puzzle our successors.

What perfect satisfaction would be like, and how happiness could be universal, no man can say, because no man has ever experienced the one or lived in a world in which the other would be possible; but these are precisely the best reasons for speculating about such things. The polite way of describing them is to call them "ideals", the rude to call them "illusions"; but both terms are unmeaning ebullitions of temper, unless we can contrive a logic that contrives to *test* ideals, despite their elusiveness, and to discriminate them from illusions. Such a logic should have a grand career; it might reduce to objectivity and order the glorious realm of man's aspirations, ideals and religions, which he demands and fancies, in order to redress the excruciating stolidity of commonplace reality. That in man which raises him above the clod will always, therefore, ask: "Is that not to be real, which so balances the pressure of brute circumstance that life can resist, and persist in being?" That too is a real question,

and one that it is becoming more and more possible to answer consonantly with our hopes. As yet, however, the influxes from the world of ideals mostly come in such questionable shape as scarcely to minister to that craving for certainty, which would put an end to the inquiry. We still have, then, abundance of questions, and assuredly Mr. Cooke has done well to discuss them in dialogue form and so suavely.

F. C. S. SCHILLER.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

The author is conscious by how much the most difficult of all the modes of philosophical writing is the dialogue form. The expert in philosophy are apt to criticise it by the tests, that are proper to a text-book or a technical treatise; the ordinary reader by tests more appropriate to a novel, a drama, or a poem. Dr. Jowett has somewhere observed that "Most of the so-called English dialogues are but poor imitations of Plato, which fall very far short of the original. The breath of conversation, the subtle adjustment of question and answer, the lively play of fancy, the power of drawing characters, are wanting in them." Indeed, a dialogue, if it is strictly logical, is apt not to be conversation. It is often nothing else but a treatise with a modification, and the writer could as well constitute himself the objector to his own reflections. Dialectical precision in a dialogue must yield something to literature and also to life. Again, if the writer is interested in nothing at all but his subject, he will interest no one in anything.

But life and reality in a dialogue *pro tanto* obscure the philosophy; and the expert philosopher may condemn the result as leisurely, discursive, cursory, superficial, or popular. Yet the attempt seems worth while the making; and, if this is allowed, at least it should endeavour to come up to the standard of its kind. A wider interest in philosophical problems is being awakened; and to suggest but a single line of thought is, perhaps, more than to settle a problem. This work in no way pretends to the exhaustive and comprehensive character of a treatise, though it is hoped that any leisureliness of logical sequence will be found to be rather in the seeming than in the reality. The author will, indeed, be content, if some philosophers are brought to consider the fundamental ethical ideas, and some readers, who are not philosophers, to discover an interest in the problem of life.

Finally, he would express his indebtedness to Canon A. H. Cruickshank and Professor Allen Mawer, who have helped him in reading and correcting the proofs, to Dr. Schiller, who has kindly contributed an introduction, and to them and other friends for much encouragement and help. The slightness of the volume may not

render inappropriate an acknowledgement of many kindnesses, without which the volume (a work of four years) would scarcely have appeared.

Armstrong College,
November 19, 1911.

CYRILLO L. MAINWARING
AMICORUM CARISSIMO
ANIMAE MEAE DIMIDIO
HOC OPUS
D. D. D.

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MAURICE, THE PHILOSOPHER.

I. LOVE AND HAPPINESS.

During a somewhat lengthy stay in his house near Oxford (he had taken it upon "going down," being possessed of a moderate competence), Maurice and I one clear summer evening a few years ago sat together in his beautiful garden, lazily stretching our limbs upon crimson-cushioned chairs and listening to the rustle of the trees in the tempering wind or looking down towards Magdalen Tower by the river Cherwell and the queenly city crowned with her gleaming golden spires. That morning we had walked to Cumnor, whither we had gone on so many journeys in the old days of our "being up," and had seen again the Church and its statue of good Queen Bess from old Cumnor Place of Sir Walter's *Kenilworth*, the millinery bills of Amy Robsart, the laudatory epitaph of Antony Foster, and taken a glass of good light ale and a meal in the "Bear and Ragged Staff," while we renewed the familiar

inquiry into the date of its famous sign-board. As back we came at a leisurely pace, for the day was hot, we fell to talking—I cannot recall the precise reason—of the Eighth and Ninth Books of the *Ethics* (plain *Ethics* they ever were to us Oxford men, who were apt to ignore Spinoza and Sidgwick)—one of the really indispensable books in the world, youthful morality in crabbed style; and Maurice had continued the conversation till the hour of dinner, for it had long been our custom to read together, in his house or my rooms hard by, "those old fellows," as he liked to call them, with a friendly touch for a foreign tongue, the Hellenic philosophers. Strangely enough (it was against his wont and the temper of so many incomparable reflections contained in that text) he appeared to be somewhat out of spirits. Philosophy had made no progress, he said, thus curiously endorsing the popular verdict, so tedious upon common lips, where I ever held it an ignorant prejudice; the same problems had puzzled the philosophers of every age; while life itself was no more completely satisfactory than in the far-off days, when Plato taught in the gardens of Academia and Aristotle expanded those subtle and graceless lecture-notes in the covered walks of the Lyceum.

"What an evening it was," exclaimed I after

dinner, "how perfectly charming! Who could resist it—the μονόχρονος ἡδονή—the inrush of pleasure—and he, as a rule, so buoyant and lively? No possible excuse for entertaining low spirits!"

"What creatures we are of mood—the philosophers, too!" said he, throwing off the melancholy humour. "The eye of the body—or is it the sun, which Sophocles somewhere so finely calls the eye of the day?—triumphs once more over the invisible eye of the soul and yet summons up remembrance of things past—those delightful evenings in that fragrant village by the Norfolk coast, winding paths, old labouring windmills, inn-parlours with cheap whiskey, the bowling-green at pleasant Hasboro'—do you remember?"

"Remember? Yes, vividly," replied I, for the retrospect gave me the utmost pleasure. "It was yesterday, surely? The fairest pictures on the films of the mind, readily developed almost at will in 'the soul's dark cottage'—those enchanting talks—the glow of delight in the brimming soul—exquisite moments, the moments of a lifetime!"

"And the makings, to be sure, of life eternal," Maurice replied. "But, an you love me, forgive the philosophy, which cannot help but come running back—even after dinner."

"Having become, indeed, veritable nature, and therefore scarcely," said I, recalling the proverb, "to be expelled by the sounding clatter of knives and forks?"

"A cutting stroke with an ancient saw," cried he with a laugh.

"Nay, blunted by too much use. Well, I suppose you are right about life."

"However, life calls ideals into being—or perhaps I should say into mind?"

"Out of dissatisfaction, like dinners?" said I.

"Yes, out of sorrow and pain. The discontented are the world's idealists. How proceeds your metaphysical poet? 'The soul's dark cottage lets in new light through chinks, that time hath made.'" And I seem to see him still, as the rays of light lingered over the curls of his rich brown hair and betrayed upon his face a pensive, peaceful and tender expression, such as you may see on the countenance of Dante Alighieri in the mural painting of the Florentine Giotto, a fine copy of which, as done by the Medici Society, hung prominent over the fire in his delectable library. "And besides," he continued, "this glow of delight, that you spoke of, Lancelot, a moment ago, is it not the very note, the essential element of perfect happiness?"

"Really? 'New light?'" cried I. "And what would you say it is more precisely—this element or note?"

"Perhaps it is love. At least you suggest it.'

"*I* suggest it?" I had just begun, and was warming to the subject, when who should make his appearance but Leonard, full of enthusiasm for such a day, and bubbling over, as we soon discovered, with some researches he had been pursuing into an ethical question, the nature of which I have dutifully forgotten. He had come down, he said, for a brief stay in his old College—just a matter of a week or two—and had taken this opportunity of seeing us; after which slight introduction we had to listen to abstruser subjects. He was a Scotsman of middle stature; his sight had been much weakened by study, and he was prematurely a little bald. He commonly affected a loose flannel collar and a flowing tie of a dark hue; and indeed he was somewhat Bohemian in his dress. Unlike so many of his contemporaries, he did not give up the pursuit of philosophy upon going down, nor was he ashamed from time to time to neglect his duties in the quest of Duty. And by profession a Public School master, he was more of the Schools than of the School.

Then followed a conversation, which ever since has remained in my mind, concerning the character of perfect happiness, of which we had never before had any precise conception. I repeat it in the form, that it took, though Leonard, should he see it, will vow he would have had us more rapid and technical in the debate—restoring philosophy by banishing life. Finding at length an opportunity to resume, I remarked to Leonard that if he could spare us a little time from his own researches, perhaps he could lend us a hand with ours. But, said I, remembering his attainments, "As they are not of a historical character, beware of driving us out of our forts with floods of learning, or we shall command you at once to subside, like Canute of old."

"Tides wait for no man! But, blissful ignorance, 'be thou my good'!" he retorted with mock gravity. "And anything for an argument, if needs must. No doubt it is all in the interests of cul—ture" (with a violent emphasis on the word). "But how far had you got in your inquiry?"

"But a very little way," replied I. "When you came in, we had just been saying that the essential element in perfect happiness was a glow of delight."

"And what," said he, "do you mean by 'glow'?"

"Why, a feeling, of course," replied I.

"Intense or steady?" said he.

"Both steady and intense, to be sure."

"Then 'glow' is a very poor word to express it, for it suggests steadiness without intensity."

"Perhaps," replied I; "but does not 'thrill' in its turn suggest intensity without duration?"

"So you mean an intense and unbroken feeling?"

"Yes, an intense and unbroken feeling; but perhaps you can suggest a word?"

Leonard, who was no mean grammarian, having been known at Oxford as "Dickers," and had written of linguistic misunderstandings, confessed that he did not know one, but would not "a life of intense delight" suggest what we meant? He would make us a present of that, though he could not make anything else of it. "A wandering light or a will-o'-the-wisp!"

"Or the light within us?" I ventured to add.

"But how comprehend the unknowable?"

Maurice had been silent as if buried in thought, handling with care the coin on his watch-chain, a George III. of the year 1795, delving, I had almost said, with a spade-guinea in the depths of thought. But hereupon he

looked up and responded to Leonard's challenge. "But why 'unknowable'? I *don't* comprehend. Something at least, I incline to think, can be discovered about perfect happiness." With his long, mobile, artistic fingers he gently brushed the curling locks from his spacious brow, as though they had dimmed his spiritual vision.

"Do tell us—it seems too good to be true," said I and urged him to speak.

"Well, you must let me argue the matter in my own way. We have defined the object of inquiry as a life of intense pleasure. Then I presume that the question arises: Is not pleasure attendant ever upon some activity, upon some experience? Or—I am not well versed in the psychological terms—is it not in itself an experience attending upon some other?"

To this we assented.

"Therefore it follows this pleasure we are seeking will also accompany some kind of experience?"

Again we assented. "But what kind of experience? That is the question."

"I will ask you another in answer," Maurice resumed. "Must we not persist and survive, if *we* are to realise this ideal of perfect happiness?"

"Yes, indeed, we must," replied I, when

Leonard interjected that we were now to catch sight of the promised land, "and I will enter in with you," he said, "if it be sufficiently to my taste."

"Then, why not," continued Maurice, "further suppose that this intense delight we spoke of will attend upon some form of intercourse with—some experience of—persons?"

No sooner said than I eagerly exclaimed that he should tell us why.

"Well, it is this way," replied he. "If our dealings with others were any longer to give us pain, life would *not* be absolutely satisfactory."

Leonard at this could not contain his knowledge, and broke out with a reference to the opening passages of the *Vita Nuova*, in which "the old Italian" (so he called him) speaks of his earliest meeting with Beatrice—"'Now is your beatitude made manifest'.—Did you ever? Such a damned bore!" exclaimed he with a lack of nicety in his language. "A curious heaven, and no place for me—I shall stay outside. Though frankly the word 'happiness' in your sense conveys nothing precise to my mind, I declare that, if anywhere at all, it is rather to be found in complete isolation."

This contrary hypothesis we could not assent to; but some banter ensued.

"What, Leonard—and all alone? Do you really mean it?" cried I.

"Yes, abjuring all evil communications—never less lonely than when all alone, to quote Dr. Copleston, Provost of Oriel (so Newman tells us)."

"Crowned king in exile, in other words?"

But Maurice was scarcely disposed for a jest. "And why favour that hypothesis, Leonard? I at least find my chiefest pleasure 'in the delightful commerce of the world'."

"I mine in the commerce of books and in the pursuit of divine philosophy."

"If the schoolmaster is often abroad, the student is more often at home. You are, I observe, your own best company. But that, I fancy, is not really the question. Grant, indeed, you are happiest in your study, considering life as it is; what reason, however, for supposing you will find *perfect* happiness there?"

"Why, to judge by my present experience."

"Your position, I think, is ambiguous, for which, indeed, is the source of the pleasure? Is it the interest you take in philosophy, or is it the fact of your being alone?"

"I can't really tell you," said Leonard. "For perhaps it is a little of both."

"If you think it the former," I suggested, "let us leave the point over at present."

"Exactly so," Maurice replied. "The point before us is isolation; and I understand Leonard to hold that perfect happiness is there to be found."

"Very well, and what then?" he replied.

"Then I have two objections against it. First of all, you appeal to experience. But are you really consistent with experience? We are looking for an ideal of life in relation to life as it is. And life, as the old Greeks have told us, is daily intercourse or living with others."

"A hackneyed maxim," said Leonard, "fit only to adorn a Greats essay! For everyone *knows* the social aspect of life was very much overdone by the Greeks."

"But surely you will grant us," said Maurice, "that man can neither come into the world without others nor, when he has come into it, so much as survive a few days?"

Leonard was not prepared to deny this.

"Man is so far, then, social," said Maurice, "and no one has lived in the world entirely independent of others, entirely without intercourse with others."

"In that bodily sense I will grant your contention."

"Then what shall his spiritual attitude be towards others?"

"Surely he may answer that question in the way I myself suggested?"

"I really do not think that he can."

"But a man may retire from the world and go into the desert—and are there not hermits and monks of the soul?"

"I need not deny that," said Maurice, "though I think that your hermits and monks in reality sought communion with God. They walked the dim cloisters of Heaven. But I will grant you, for the sake of the argument, that there are a few men in the world, who would delight in complete isolation. Then I come to my second objection. Could St. Anthony, St. Simeon and the rest guard themselves against intrusion by others—even in what men of so darkened intellect call the dark ages?"

"Well, I suppose that they could not altogether."

"Then how will you succeed, where they failed, and draw a fence, as it were, round yourself?"

"Quite the philosopher triumphant," he said. "That," he added, with some hesitation, as if conscious of breaking the compact, "is the final cause of society, says the—pardon me—the Arabian commentator upon Aristotle, your great mentor."

"*Dominus illuminatio mea!*" said I. "And so philosophy is your shield of the spirit?"

"Yes, for it cuts a man off from the crowd."

"In the spirit, I presume that you mean?"

"Yes, in the spirit."

"But it cannot steer you clear of it bodily —or spatially, I might say. To be alone is obviously to be ever in danger of meeting another. So complete isolation, complete solitude, seems quite unattainable."

"And unknowable also," Maurice remarked, "for Leonard admits he can give no account of it. So I think we must take man as social or abandon the search for an ideal of happiness."

Leonard took this all in good part, and our preliminary difficulties thus seemed at an end. We were now in a position to continue our conversation with general good humour. "Well, may we go on?" asked Maurice.

"Yes, and what next?" I ejaculated.

"Why, what of philosophy?" cried Leonard. "Can you so far assent to my view as to find room for that in your Heaven?"

"A Platonic symposium?" said Maurice. "I really don't know; you must give me some time for reflection. For I cannot conjecture at present what would be the precise character of this ideal intercourse of persons."

In that case, Leonard protested, our theory was no better off than his own. He did not see the use of discussing it, though we might fashion a mythical picture and become Oxford, not Cambridge Platonists, if we had a turn for the business and the time to bestow, adding a very precise topography, with the sun and the moon and the stars in their courses.

And, said I, omit the love, that moves them—in Dante's words? But how very unjust of Leonard, for had we not named the essential element in our conception—the love of persons pure and unalloyed with pain! But what did he mean by philosophy? Systematic inquiry, he replied, into Goodness and Beauty, Reality and Truth. To this I retorted that, notwithstanding "the pleasures of knowledge" and those, that are said to accrue in the acquiring of it, I was much inclined to suppose that we should never be perfectly happy, until we had done with such quests altogether.

"Oh, the garden of Eden," cried Leonard, "the tree of knowledge with the apples consumed!" Then he murmured those lines from *Paradise Lost* about "the grand infernal peers"—

> In discourse more sweet
> (For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense),
> Others apart sat on a hill retir'd,

> In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
> Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
> Fixt fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
> And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
> Of good and evil much they argu'd then,
> Of happiness and final misery,
> Passion and apathy, and glory and shame,
> Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy:
> Yet with a pleasing sorcery could charm
> Pain for a while, or anguish, and excite
> Fallacious hope, or arm th' obdured breast
> With stubborn patience as with triple steel.

"So you would follow the grand old Puritan, consigning philosophy to the lower world?"

I said that *I* should consign it to an intermediate sphere between Heaven and Hell.

"Then Heaven is not the fruition of philosophy?"

"Not its fruition—the fruit, perhaps, of the tree of knowledge."

"Then you hold by that ancient doctrine that increase of knowledge increaseth sorrow, which, you know, is a household word."

"If so, it would be a loose quotation," said I, "of which you could scarcely be guilty. Increase of knowledge may increase sorrow; on the other hand, it may not in the progress of life on the earth. But that we are not considering; we are considering perfect happiness, and, if

we were perfectly happy, why argue of 'happiness and final misery'? Should we ask ourselves *if* we were happy, or what happiness meant, or many similar questions?"

"That is but one branch of philosophy."

"You mean," said Maurice, "that the happy man may exert his mind on those other branches?"

"Yes, to be sure," returned he.

"Well, for my own part," Maurice replied, "I cannot see how they could possibly arise. I cannot see that we should ask such questions as what is the Real or the Beautiful, the Good or the True."

"Why, here we are discussing the Good, which was not in question!"

"Oh, but it *is*," cried I, "for perfect happiness is just the Good."

It now appeared that our conversation would go off at a tangent, but Maurice broke in. "Never mind about that," cried he. "Later on we may consider the question, whether to call perfect happiness 'good.' For the present let us keep to our point. And I think we may arrive at an answer by looking at the matter in this way. Do you think we should distinguish good and evil, real and unreal, true and untrue, beautiful and ugly, were we perfectly happy?"

"Indeed," said Leonard, "I don't see why not."

"Because the distinctions imply dissatisfaction. How, for instance, be perfectly delighted, if you pronounce anything whatsoever to be ugly?"

"Or," ventured I, "if your statements are denied?"

Leonard appeared to be much disappointed. "Why," we said, "by the expression of your features you are yourself very good evidence!" Thereupon he could not help joining in the laugh, that was turned against him.

"Now," said Maurice, "will you have some whiskey, 'a pleasing sorcery', I am always told, potent to drive out dissatisfaction?"

"Yes, a *real* symposium," cried I; but Leonard replied he did not drink whiskey, an old temptation, that he now resisted "with triple steel"; and in answer to some mild banter he said that those, who live for the glass, should not throw stones. However, with a little persuasion he was prevailed upon to take a small dose for the sake of drinking and thinking together as in the old days.

Then, returning to the subject, "Do you see," cried he, "since you are ruling philosophy out, you would rule self-consciousness out as well?"

"I am not yet certain," said I, "about that."

Maurice suggested that it all depended upon what we meant by self-consciousness.

"Oh, reflection upon one's experience," Leonard replied, "criticism, comparison, contrast."

"Yes," said I, collecting my thoughts, "I should rule those out, at any rate just in so far as they engender dissatisfaction. If, however, you can show them consistent with intense delight, we would raise no objection." The point appeared to be of small importance. "But," continued I after a moment, "surely self-consciousness has another sense—I mean, may have a different application?"

"What sort of a sense?" said he.

"Why, to be sure, we are sometimes aware of the feeling of pleasure, attending upon this or that activity? Not that we argue about them at all, put questions or frame propositions in our mind, but we are interested in our experience simply as a whole—we may 'find ourselves'," I said, "'self-awareness', I think they call it in the psychological treatises."

"Well, you may find it in a book of psychology; you will scarcely find it in the book of the soul."

"But really, he, who runs, may read. In a game of cricket—" but I got no further, for "I

never play cricket," he interrupted. "I simply abhor the game—so utterly selfish—the individual plays for the average."

"In a game of cricket," said I, "to play off my own bat and not by the book, or billiards—your favourite vice"—(noting this outburst and taking the cue) "might serve us as well, I have sometimes made a drive to the boundary in a College match with that delightful ease of motion, which you may see described or pictured in many a work, for the edification of the backward boy cricketer, and continually exemplified by the famous masters of the art from Fuller Pilch, the father, I think, of forward play, to the present time. Only to think of what you have missed—only to think of the reaching forward to the ball and the shoulder firmly set, the blade of the bat full-faced, the supple wrist and the eye intent! I have been aware of it all, I have had such a thrill as has seldom been my lot at the game. Well, I should call that self-consciousness—in a certain sense—though I did not reflect nor debate with myself, for as poor old Coates would impress on us quaintly at school, 'Stop to think, and they have you—first in two minds and then in the pavilion, sir!'"

"I know the experience, Lancelot," said Maurice, "for I too have had it." Then, eyeing

him with a pleasant smile, he added, "But has Leonard nothing to say? Has he *never* experienced the like in dealing with people, or does silence give consent?"

"Nonsense, nonsense," protested Leonard somewhat warmly, "is that the way you would bowl me out?" and we saw the blush overspreading his cheeks, as the sun went down.

"Well, enough of old scores," I remarked. "There is nothing, I protest, uncongenial to you, inherent in the doctrine itself, as I think you will see, if you consider your cloister."

"Well, I don't deny your doctrine; I simply dislike your illustrations."

At this point there was a pause in our talk, which was not without some sense of uneasiness from our coming, as it were, to the end of a chapter and to so vital a divergence in sympathy. Leonard cast furtive glances towards us and took a long pull at his glass, after which to our infinite pleasure he filled it again. But we began to despair of his continuing the argument and he to remark on the state of the garden, when I ventured to suggest our returning to a point, of which our comments upon isolation had just put me in mind, namely, that if any soul was to be happy, then must all assuredly be so. "Would not anyone," continued I, "who

had failed to attain this life we are supposing, be liable to break in upon those, who might otherwise be enjoying it, and import into their lives also an element of pain—just as though you were buried happily in one of those recondite problems, under three handfuls of ancient dust, and Maurice or I were to burst in upon you and storm you with a tale of woe? I protest that not all the veterans of all the ages could resist that."

"Killing all the birds with one stone," said he, "or, to change the metaphor, bridging the gulf from the individual to the universal point of view?—But the bridge, like your old friend Mill's, is much in the air.—You know the illogical pig-wash story?"[1]

"Much in the air? At our feet, to be sure. So far from assuming without a reason that each one's happiness involves the happiness of all the rest, that in some mysterious way they will 'coincide' in the end, as the philosophers say, we have shown you how and why they are inextricably intertwined."

[1] Mill had argued that, because each man desires his own greatest happiness, all desire the greatest happiness of all. Both premises and conclusion are entirely fallacious. Carlyle parodied this by supposing that, if each pig desires the greatest amount of pig-wash for himself, all desire the most for all. *Epicuri de grege porci!*

"So that, to parody the saying of Solon," replied Leonard, "call no man happy, until all men love."

"Bravo!" said Maurice. "Worthy of a lover of the argument, too. So we have turned a new corner in the chase, and found awaiting us a wider, more comprehensive ideal—*universal* happiness is the goal, a society, an aggregate of lives—clearly none other. Many a true word is spoken in irony; you have hit it admirably, Leonard."

But Leonard would not be put down. "*Universal* happiness, you say, but, Sir Oracle, be more particular. Do you mean an union of all in all?"

"And what did *that* mean?" said Maurice in turn.

"All-comprehensive," replied he.

"Correct enough but a little incomprehensible, like a King's speech in the King's English, delivered, however, from the throne itself."

Here Leonard said rather testily that he wanted to know if we should have this feeling of love for everyone—would *that* do?—and was *that* clear?

To which we replied that we saw his point, but was there any reason in life for supposing such a relation possible; not to mention, of course,

that we could never stand quite in the same relation, strictly speaking, to any two other persons at once?

Thereupon Leonard laughed outright. "Why, it is just as I thought—the pair of lovers, the human dyad and the pairing animal! Double blessedness! The poet's nightmare—the philosopher's world-dream!"

Maurice said we were not for erecting a romantic idyll into a life's ideal. All we demanded was that this intense delight we called love should in each life be uninterrupted, and Leonard had certainly adduced no reason why it should attend upon intercourse only with one other soul.

"Really?" said Leonard. "Could we have a succession of experiences, then—now of one person, now of another?"

"Very possibly," answered Maurice, "but you miss my meaning. May we not in our present lives be in what I may call a direct relation to more than one other person at once—just now, for instance, I mean, we are drinking and conversing together, not *tête-à-tête*, it is true, but face to face? We have not yet, however, succeeded in pressing the whole world into a *salon*—with Leonard, for choice, as *arbiter elegantiarum!*"

Leonard hereupon spoke volubly of the decline of conversation, ascribing it mostly to the advance of bridge and the decay of the classics; but later he returned to his question about a succession of experiences—should we allow it or not in this life of perfect love?

"Well, I see nothing against it," said Maurice.

"Oh, there is everything," answered Leonard, "and everyone knows of the incongruity between mutability and perfection. I see you have not read me on that subject in the current *Mind*, which he, who runs a subscription, may read."

To this omission we pleaded guilty; indeed, we ever fought shy of that periodical, and most of all, when our friends contributed. But what was this incongruity he spoke of—could he not explain the argument of his article?

"Why," Leonard replied, "should mankind become perfect, any change in their state would be a falling away or a lapse from that high ideal —a transition from a perfect condition to one, that was no longer perfect."

"And by 'perfect' do you mean," said Maurice, "perfectly good?"

"I should not be surprised," replied he, with a somewhat superior air.

"Well, I think we agreed just now that we

would not yet consider the Good, nor Perfection, if that is the same. That this love or delight itself, as we said before, not the experience or—it may be—experiences, on which it attends, should continue unbroken is all we require for the argument."

"Which goes, forsooth, with a broken course and a very lame foot," retorted Leonard, "for here we are—and the wingéd hours fast slipping away—without an answer to my main question. You talk of love, but is it a love for all, for some or for one other only—why so ambiguous, so cloud-compelling?"

"In the manner of oracles," replied Maurice, "which is why they are always on the side of truth." And he looked the part, as he said this.

"I wonder," said I, for I was inclined to argue for the dependence of happiness upon the few, and it had come into my mind to make yet a further appeal to experience, "if we might approach this difficult question in a different way."

Leonard very impatiently: "What way?" But I did not catch sight of his countenance, for indeed I did not look at him. But the spirit of adventure was on me, and I took refuge in a certain boldness; so I began in a tentative manner, as though what I had to say on the

matter befitted the ear of Maurice alone. "Leonard, I fear, will laugh, when I tell him. But at the risk of giving him *munus maximi risus*, as Catullus has it, I will try what can be done; for there is no other subject, to which I have so much and so often given my mind, as this of love. Perhaps the point, that has just been raised, is not so material here and now, if the end we have set before us be the happiness of each and all. But consider a moment. At this or that time of our lives we have direct relations with many persons, but never at any one moment with all. At this or that time we meet them, for instance, at a game of cricket —or shall I say billiards?—a tedious social function, a political gathering of the Primrose League; perhaps we exchange views on some business in the practical work of the world; we may even be thrown often enough into contact with them to get a superficial knowledge of them." I broke off, hesitating to go on.

"Yes," said Maurice, "and flatter it with the grand old name of friendship, which, alas, has come to be used by our modern dilettanti of people, with whom we are but very indifferently acquainted. The world of to-day is complex, various, and versatile: therein may, indeed, lie its strength. It lacks sustained and burning

intensity of feeling for persons and ideas; that is its chiefest defect. But I interrupt; pray, go on and tell me, my dear Lancelot, the trend of your remarks."

And he encouraged me to proceed, which I did, for I feared that, if Leonard broke in, our discussion at this point would diverge into matters of merely historical interest. For Leonard was more drawn to the past history than the present reality of friendship; and we were all products of "the grand, old, fortifying, classical curriculum."

"Yes, while the Greeks were in love with an ideal, we are in love with a sensation; and everybody, who could love rationally, seems to have taken to cynicism. I meant that with most men and women time antiquates all ties, which become so often present antipathies, as past pleasures. For a moment we call them friends; we may even live with them or meet them daily. And then through some circumstance or other we drift apart, as the phrase is, not steering a common course. They vanish again from our lives, like birds of passage, and are forgotten; or on festive and reminiscent occasions we summon up a pleasant picture of the days we spent together, ending up with 'Auld Lang Syne' in a ring and a fervour. Why, Leonard, with *all*

your protestations and your abuse of cricket, you simply worshipped the caps and the colours in the good old times at school. Just to think of the incense you burned! What giants and heroes there were in those days! And even Hugh Neville, you know, in Mr. Benson's book, once gave his heart away—and that to a schoolboy hero. But I forgot you decline to sacrifice at Mr. Benson's altar fire. To return to our friends, we have not that dissatisfaction now in their absence, however prolonged, which can be terminated only by the renewal of intercourse and of mental communion. They become to us little more than one, whom we have known and admired in the report of his works or his thoughts in the *Morning Post*—or in the pages, I might say, of your master, *Mind*."

Leonard assented. "Of all the men," said he, "who met from night to night in my rooms in Oxford (I was then in the High, you know), there is scarcely one, of whom I have not lost word altogether." (Leonard was somewhat the eldest of us, and it was now some years since his "going down.") "And I distrust altogether the proverb that absence makes the heart fonder. Yet the corporate life of the Universities, we used to say, in the flower of youth, provided the soil, wherein the most fruitful friendships

grow. Dear, delightful Oxford!" he cried, "Oh, to be literally 'up' again! How fearlessly we canvassed every problem! How frankly we criticised our friends! How we fought to the stumps of our intellects, as old Lord Coleridge said in *his* day! If in Cambridge they split the atom, to be sure in Oxford we split hairs. Well, they are all gone now, some to Fleet Street, some to India, some to an efficient self-effacement in Government offices at Whitehall, others to an ineffectual prominence at Westminster. It does not make me in the least unhappy. To speak truth, I hated letters and writing far more than I loved my friends, and never in sober mood (nor over the cups at Bump Suppers) perjured myself nor made a vow to keep in touch with them. Cheap communication has long destroyed close friendship, and the epistolary art was doomed by the stroke of the pen, that enacted the penny post."

"For shame, Leonard!" cried I. "You make men immoral by Act of Parliament, to have the pleasure of misquoting a phrase."

"And is *no* man indispensable?" Maurice asked.

"Possibly man, but scarcely men. The men you never will do without you may never find. What does friendship mean, as the world interprets it?"

"Cordial indifference," I ventured to suggest.

"And re-interpret it, Lancelot?"

"Oh, passionate concentration."

Leonard admitted that in his boyhood he had conceived more than one violent passion, resembling Dante and Byron, "two young sinners," he called them, in that respect. "But," said he with an *apologia pro vita sua* and a wave of his hand, "I soon outgrew them, like youthful diseases—they do not last any more than the passion for Rossetti's poems, which comes upon everyone at an early time of his life. It is only in youth that one is enamoured of 'the House of Life'—or the temple of love."

"Only the cold or the inexperienced decline to worship in the temple of love," remarked Maurice with some severity.

"And that brings me," I said at last, "to the other side of the matter. Sometimes" (and here I glanced at Maurice, whose eyes with rare tenderness looked into mine, and his face was such that in it "sweet love should ever dwell") "we form a stronger, more enduring tie—with two or three others and not with one only, soul to soul and spirit to spirit. They are essential to us, by which I mean that we are pained and inconsolable at leaving them; the longer their absence, the greater grows the pain,

and nothing but reunion can remove it. Do you never feel that, Leonard?"

"Not a bit of it," replied he.

"But what says the author of *In Memoriam*, that splendid expression of friendship, only marred by too great insistence upon the revivals of fallible science?—

> Their meetings made December June,
> Their every parting was to die.

Surely there are many similar passages (I appeal to you, Leonard) in the range of literature, both ancient and modern?"

Leonard with an impetuous shrug: "I cannot away with them. I dislike such expressions of feeling. Better the refined vocabulary of caresses and the subtle language of sighs! A man should be stronger, more self-reliant." All this we were prone to regard as the sweepings of his magisterial manner.

"Something of a John Bull sort of creature," said I, "as the caricatures depict him, worthy of these days of the half-penny newspaper, the commercial journal with the literary supplement once a week?"

And there followed much, that I need not report, to the same effect, upon "manly independence," as Leonard termed it, and so forth. At College, I may remark, he had been an

ardent volunteer and had acquired a very strong prejudice against everything termed "effeminate," and a rooted belief, not uncommonly professed among modern statesmen, in the efficacy of war to promote "the moral fibre of nations," as though it had been *Si vis bonum, para bellum.*

"I knew," said I, "you would talk like that; but may not our ideal society be composed of groups of lovers?"

Leonard said he did not see why. "I find my own friends ready-made in the people I meet from time to time, and the circle is ever growing wider."

"Ah! you have such a genius for acquaintance." And Maurice added with a smile that he would soon be "squaring the circle," which mathematicians have ever declared an impossibility.

"But why won't you listen to reason, Leonard?" said I. "If our society is to be made up of mutually exclusive pairs (which is also, I think, what is commonly called the bisexual ideal), each individual person will be related to one other only, but never to a third or fourth. But, in truth, there are some, who conceive an attachment of a deep and rational character for more than one other human being."

"Well, I will not deny it," said Leonard.

"Not to mention that you promised to hear us out to the end!"

"I have heard it so often before!"

"But these two or three friends," continued I, "do you think we shall *ever* surrender one of them? To exclude them all save one—is *that* the way to attain to happiness? Depend upon it, we should sooner or later recall them in spiritual presence, and there would come upon us dissatisfaction, which would never be quite removed, until we had sought and found the loved one again."

"Yes, Lancelot," said Maurice very simply.

"Moreover," I continued, "we may well form ties of enduring quality with more than one other, though I doubt indeed whether we could ever form them with many. For the wider the area beyond a point, over which we spread our affections, the less intense they become in each single case, until each friendship is a shallow pool. So for myself I incline to think the basis of happiness would be one or two other friends only—that, if they were withdrawn, the feeling of delight would be greatly diminished or lost altogether; not so, if the rest were removed."

"Yes," said Maurice, "I cannot conceive we could have experience of all at once, nor, on the

other hand, the necessity of having experience of each in turn. Then, too, in how many cases we find such happiness as we can attain to here dependent upon continual intercourse with one or two friends, akin to us in intellect and character! Everything divides but similarity; the material may unite even the ends of the earth; nothing unites neighbours but the spiritual. Long acquaintance and common interests make true friendship; in and through the spirit or intellect friendship lives; swift passion makes swift disaster and brief pleasure. But the truest of friends" (and here he spoke in a most musical voice), "the friend of his soul, his almost perfect friend, is man's source of delight for ever."

Upon his word Leonard thought that friends had commonly nothing in common.

"How romantic of you!" said I. "An *argumentum ad mulierem!* But in that case why do you like them?"

"Oh—because—," replied Leonard abruptly.

"A delightfully feminine reason, or perhaps no reason at all—worthy, indeed, of dear Miss Middleton, who, you know, is so rational in *all* her likes and dislikes." (Miss M. was a common acquaintance.)

"Well, if you *must* analyse it," he said,

"'engendered in the eyes, by gazing fed,' as Shakespeare himself declares, and a better judge you will scarcely find—a feast of the flesh."

"A very poor kind of love," said Maurice, "and common enough in these latter days, but scarce likely to survive death, not to mention the changes and chances of this physical life. No; be ours, as the poet has it, 'the feast of reason and the flow of soul'."

"Did I understand you to say 'survive death'? Your theory involves immortality, then?"

"Yes, I think that it does," said Maurice, "some other world."

"Where Guinevere may spring once more to the side of Arthur?"

"Yes, perhaps," replied I, "for is it not a wonderful recantation, that final speech of 'the guilty Queen's'—one of the most classical things in all modern English art?"

"But assuming a future life, how do you know that the ties you speak of will endure, when the friends go hence?"

"Perhaps," said I, "it depends on their strength here and now—not only intensity, I mean, but also rational basis. Why not, indeed? The stronger the tie, by which either friend is bound to the other, the more likely it is to

survive all vicissitude and change; and death, thank Heaven, may be only the greatest of all changes."

For a moment nothing further was said, but Leonard began tapping his boots together and trolling a verse of his favourite song, "Tom Bowling," sending the old man once more "aloft," as oft he had done in his college days. Then he remarked in a musing way, "I am wondering whether I shall have the pleasure of your company among the *élite*—ahem! the peers —of your paradise."

"Oh, *that* shall be as you wish," replied Maurice with characteristic urbanity. "At least, we will not try to hold you by force." But I could not resist saying, "I shall be trembling all over for fear you may pop out of your solitary confinement, your thinking shop, that has never a customer, in the whole length and breadth of nowhere, and burst in upon the charmed circle and cry out on the vanity of life. And then I should be so sorry, you know."

"Well, in the meantime," remarked Maurice, "as we are not in Heaven, we children of Earth can only go by our present experience, for, if we think of a future life as utterly dissimilar from the present, we cannot conjecture about it at all."

Leonard thereon recited—he was a first-hand authority on second-rate thought—a poem out of that charming collection, "The Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics"—

> Love not me for comely grace,
> For my pleasing eye or face,
> Nor for any outward part,
> No, nor for my constant heart,—
> For those may fail, or turn to ill,
> So thou and I shall sever:
> Keep therefore a true woman's eye,
> And love me still, but know not why—
> So hast thou the same reason still
> To doat upon me ever!

"Very pretty," said I, "but an anonymous poem—is it not?—of which its author perchance was ashamed for its sense or lack of sense, like a friend disowned. And 'the same reason' is none at all. But the mind grows akin to that it reads in. And, by-the-bye, as you run into verse, there is Francis Thompson on the 'constant heart'; or may I recall a small poem of my own?"

"Beginning," interjected Leonard, "'O love, my love'?"

"Listen," said I, and repeated the lines—

> Is love the passion of a passing day,
> That swiftly comes and slow dissolves away,
> Itself not knowing?

Is it the winsome trick, that takes the heart,
And for the moment bids us never part,
Ourselves bestowing;
The alluring gaze of unfamiliar eyes,
The unfathomed mystery, that secret lies
In sweet words flowing;
The dainty gesture of a tripping maid,
The very smile, wherein she is arrayed?—
On the world's showing.
But true love is of handsome heart and brain,
Of all the world in love doth most disdain,
Too quick delighting.
With such love do I commune, dearest friend,
Can love, if thou love likewise, love expend,
Or e'er know blighting?

"So true love—ahem!—" said Leonard, "is a sort of second, not of first sight, as the generality would have it. You must certainly turn poet again, or write a book upon the Imitation of Aristotle for English Readers and Scottish Reviewers."

"No," replied I, "the imitation of youth! But I agree with Maurice that we must go by our present experience or conjecture nothing; and modern psychology tells us how often 'old friends' are but cast-off habits, and friendships so often but patched-up garments, that stood not the stress of hard weather; how emotions are forgotten, never to be kindled again; how the superstructure is destroyed along

with its basis; how some men, as old age comes apace and they have one foot already in the grave and the other in the bath of Lethe, grow cold and indifferent or disaffected towards old affections, and their memory altogether decays."

Leonard, who was looking into the stores of his learning again, here quoted a passage from Leibnitz, familiar to every philosopher, how the continuance of personal identity is the same with the continuance of memory.

I thanked him for the reference and added: "But if, in truth, 'in another world' we keep any remembrance of the past, if that world is continuous with ours in some psychological sense, then what is more likely than that we should remember those, of whom we are daily thinking, with whom we share our lives, who are our help and consolation in distress?"

"With whom, in the last resort," added Maurice, "we share a common enthusiasm, a common pursuit of the Good, for if *that* tie is not enduring, no other can certainly be. For such, perhaps, is the love immortal, that is neither built of the bodily sense nor cast out of the common clay."

Leonard thought by the ring of the phrase that I must have been reading John Henry Newman, which, I said shyly, was probably the

case. And so we came to the Good once more, to which, as it seemed, all our reasoning led; better to sum up the results we had reached.

"Results—and what are they?" said Maurice.

"Come, Maurice, you shall tell us," said Leonard; "tell us those dreams, that prelude the dawn."

Maurice seemed for a moment to hesitate, but agreed on condition that, if needs be, we should correct him.

"Shall I begin at the beginning," said he, "or plunge *in medias res*? As you please."

"The beginning is half of the whole."

"And observe, first of all," (with a smile) "that our problem is perfect happiness, or a life, that would have for an element so great a delight as to exclude all dissatisfaction and pain?"

"Well," we said, "but go on by yourself."

"If I can," replied he. "I have such a bad memory for an argument. But I recall Leonard's laughing and saying that we could not discover the nature of happiness, and then our dissenting from him entirely upon reflection, for we hit upon perfect love as the essential characteristic and the source of it some intercourse with persons. So much I remember—the beggarly

elements, plain and precise, to the best of my power—and, next in order, I think, the suggestion that no one could achieve perfect happiness himself, unless everyone else, who survived, should achieve it; and the argument thus came round from an individual to an universal point of view. After that, we went on to inquire if each soul in this ideal life would love one other only or all, and then if we should have a succession of experiences. To the latter of these questions we suggested a positive answer; to the former we replied that neither all nor one but a few only may be essential. But *solvitur ambulando*, so you have told me, or was it *bibendo*?" (with a glance at the whiskey). "We must try to attain to the goal; and while arguing from the present and the past, we must see what the future brings forth. For the future has all things in its womb; yet it will bring forth a definite creature. It is thought to be everything, while as yet it is nothing. Such, if my memory serves me, are the first-fruits of the tree of knowledge."

"Which branches," said I, "into one more point—in this ideal life it is not their own happiness but that of others, which each will constitute or make possible; for the source of the pleasure of each will be intercourse with

others, but none will be a means to any other in any further sense whatever."

"But after all," cried Leonard, "what *has* it to do with the Good? Remember that you promised to tell me."

"We did," replied Maurice. "But shall we attempt it just now?"

"Yes; hope deferred brings suspicion," cried Leonard, "and I am anxious to hear the main thesis of this new Amourist School of Philosophy."

"It is the problem," replied I, "of the meaning of 'good'—the most central and difficult in ethical science. It is at once too late in the day and too soon to attack it. The eye of the soul grows dim, the spiritual force is abated."

"See!" said Maurice. "The moon—the full-horned moon in all her glory—is up! Let us be content for the present, if we have a little elucidated the idea of happiness. Night comes on apace. But I, too, should be glad to inquire whether universal happiness be the Good; and that, perhaps, we may consider to-morrow, if you have nothing better to do and will join us."

"I should love," replied Leonard, "to hear what you have to put forward. I have nothing better to do, quite the spoilt child of leisure!"

To which Maurice replied, as we rose, with a humourous slap on the back.

"Then we will have a division of leisure, and let it be early."

With that Leonard placed his fingers daintily in ours, and we bade him a hearty good-night. Upon his departure, we went into the house together—Maurice and I—and Maurice laid his hand upon my shoulder and looked at me with wistful eyes and said, as though to the manner born, "This may well seem a great enterprise, upon which we have embarked; but perhaps we two together, beloved one, may yet achieve something."

"My dearest friend," replied I, as I pressed him instinctively by the hand, "let us set out together, and together let us steer to the land of light."

MAURICE, THE PHILOSOPHER.

II. HAPPINESS THE GOOD.

As I noticed the next morning upon our coming together that Leonard was in very good time and a very good humour (being indeed both pleasant and punctual) despite his discomfiture, if so I may call it, of the previous evening, I ventured to inquire "if he was early out of bed, for he slept and rose up to the glory of the great mother Philosophy."

"And you," returned he with a smile, "to the glory of the great mother Earth?"

"Yes, Nature calls even to the recluse."

Leonard shook his head very uncertainly but put the matter beyond any doubt by remarking that, "as Omar had it, 'wilderness was paradise enow'."

"Not for long, as I fancy," said Maurice, with his eye upon the distant horizon, that portended great heat. "However, the day is yet

young; so let us to our subject at once. How refreshing and soft blows the air, like the breeze, that blew from off the ocean in the Elysian isles of old legend! May it cool the zest of ethical battle!"

"Oh, the battle is quite academic." This with an air of affected indifference.

"Academic? Not at all," replied Maurice. "You will know that fine saying of Aristotle—the first book, as I fancy, of the *Ethics*—if only we are cognisant of the Good, we shall hit the mark better in practice."

"Yes, but first we must hit on the Good. And that, at least, I insist we have *not* done."

"To be sure, we have discovered our difference, which is either the end to all argument or the first step towards an agreement. Upon our parting, as I fancy, last night, we disagreed about the meaning of 'good.' You dissented from Lancelot's opinion. And he meant by it 'absolutely satisfactory'."

"Exactly," said I, interposing.

"In which case the Good," returned he, "or everything we adjudge to be 'good,' must needs be the happiness of all?"

"You understand me, as ever," said I.

"Then there is no longer a question at all of their relation one to another?"

"No question at all," replied I. "They are neither incongruous nor different."

Hereupon Leonard, who had been awaiting his chance, broke in with a good deal of vigour. "Well," cried he, "we have all our divinities. And there are many men love hath made mad—wherein, indeed, it resembles much learning. But I think you were quite wrong last evening. Pardon the words of our elegant spirits, but your solution was too 'cheap and easy.' It overlooks the main point of the problem—it commits the great naturalistic fallacy."

"The great—what did you say?" replied I. "Did you name it, as Adam the queer beasts of old time?"

"My dear fellow, all fallacies have a past, if but few have a future. This one runs through the history of Ethics; and it matters not the least what you call it, so you know it, when you happen to see it.—Don't you know it?" queried he in surprise.

"No, I don't," replied I very frankly.

Maurice thought, on the contrary, that it ought to be something quite new. "Why," cried he, "you may be deep in the past—up to the eyes, as the common phrase has it—but all ears for any modern diversion." Then he cited those

familiar lines about the Clerk of Oxenforde in Chaucer—

> Of study he took most curë and most heed,
> Not one word spake he more than there was need.

"Well," said I, "before we grant you the fallacy, at least you must explain what it means."

"What it means?" replied Leonard. "Just this. You say that 'good' means 'absolutely satisfactory'—in other words, you identify or confuse it with a property, that is really quite distinct and quite different. Now, to confuse 'good' with any other predicate is to commit the naturalistic fallacy—and *that* is the great fallacy in Ethics."

I was not a little alarmed at this contention, with which I had not until then, whether from idleness or chance, become acquainted; to speak truth, I had an instant suspicion that it came out of the University of Cambridge; but I proposed that we should look into the matter, which we thereupon all agreed to do. Maurice was to open the Turkish cigarettes, which had just come from Samos, and Leonard, this accomplished, the inquiry.

"*A vous, Monsieur*," cried I, desiring him at once to begin, and being fortified, as someone has put it, with the μονόχρονος ἡδονή of a

cigarette. "You are so clever, so expansive in the morning—quite a distinctive characteristic of your own—so delightfully wilful in the evening. I do not know when I like you the better."

"You must like me this morning. Will you answer?"

"We will answer with pleasure, if we can. Or I will answer for myself and Maurice also."

"Do you think, then," cried he, "that we ought first to know the meaning of 'good'?"

"Yes, of course," replied I, "if we are really to find out the Good. Otherwise we might find it by chance; but we could not satisfy ourselves or others, nor place the matter beyond any cavil."

"And can we further define 'good'?" said he, taking a very long pull at the tobacco.

"I will tell you, when I know what you mean."

"What I mean is just this," returned he. "A definition is a statement of the parts, that together go to make up a thing. Take a friend; we may define him, as I think, by his physical organs or his spiritual traits."

"I cannot dispute it," said I, "with a man of so very many parts. 'Good' cannot be defined in that sense."

"It is, therefore, not complex?" said Leonard.

"It cannot be carved into parts by the instruments of logical dissection."

"Very well, then; go on," returned I. For I had by this time overcome my uneasiness and was now desirous to comprehend his meaning; for it struck me that first feelings are so often premature in their character.

"Then I suppose that, if 'good' is not a complex, it must be what I call a simple notion?"

Leonard was leaning eagerly over towards me; and a look of enthusiasm lit up his pale face. I could not, indeed, refrain from conceiving what a picture he would make of a devotee. For it happens at times that the mind may waste, without impairing, the body.

"Upon my word, I do not understand you. A simple notion—did you call it?" cried Maurice.

"A simple notion," replied Leonard at once. "Take, for instance, say, green, red, and so on. They mean nothing but red, green, etc., and cannot be analysed into any parts."

"Oh, but *I*, at least, call them sensations," answered Maurice, with his hand upon his brilliant green tie.

"You are partial, like an artist, to green; but it means simply green, nothing else."

"And 'good' means 'good'—nothing else—you contend?"

"Precisely," cried Leonard. "You have it."

"Nothing else? Why, Leonard!" I interrupted, as I gazed at the smoke from old Samos. "I declare this cigarette is most good! And I mean it is *pleasant* to the taste. And how pleasing, how delightful the aroma! Maurice has ever the perfect cigarette."

"New clouds upon the problem!" cried he. "That, believe me, is verbal, purely verbal. Of course, the word 'good' has many uses, for anything I know to the contrary. But I fear you mistake me altogether. Is philosophy a war about words? Is it not concerned, indeed, with ideas?"

"So, Lexilogus," said I, leaping up and recalling old Fitz's *Euphranor*, "you are not talking about the word 'good'?"

"No: not about words, about notions. The compilers of dictionaries and jests are serious, if you like, about words; but for that the philosopher is too humourous."

"Ah! Quite a new light," replied I; and after a pause, "I begin to see now. . . . So there is something quite distinct from the word?"

"Absolutely distinct. 'Good' signifies or stands for the notion, as *ἀγαθός*, *bonus* and *bon* in other tongues."

"Is it also distinct from other notions?"

"It is unique and peculiar," said he.

This brought us at once to the point. "So," said I, "we now know where we are. But what sort of a thing?" continued I. "And is there anything—a notion or idea, predicate, property, or whatever you will—distinct from but denoted by the word 'good'?"

"Yes, of course. I am certain absolutely," said Leonard, speaking *ex cathedra*. And, as he spoke, he was playing with a flower and playing the part of high-priest of the notion.

"How strange it were, if it were true! But I really don't think that it is."

"But I contend a man will find this unique notion, if he look into the very workings of his intellect. Everyone, I insist, is aware of it."

"Save only the philosopher?" said I. "And *he*, presumably, may think it away."

Maurice said that he, for one, could not find it; but Leonard answered, shrugging his shoulders uneasily: "Old Thrasymachus in Plato's *Republic* thrust the argument into the souls of his opponents. I will not, being but a poor Sophist, attempt a similar feat with the notion. But, if you don't find it there in your minds, how can you ever have a system of morals?"

"The flaw in the whole doctrine," cried I,

"is simply that I can't find the notion. Nothing will bring us, I see, to an agreement, if you have it and Maurice and I not."

"And there's an end to the argument?" cried he. "We must first get on parallel lines; or else we can never really meet."

"But you forget that I have a system of Ethics. Or, at any rate, I am trying to get one."

"What in the world will there be for it to deal with? There is psychology, of course, and there is history. But can *they* tell us anything of the Good? No, nothing, simply nothing, I fancy—undeserving the philosopher's interest."

"Poor psychologists!" interposed I. "You pursue them with such an absence of soul. Not to mention poor history—too mundane, far too closely allied with facts!"

"Why, poor history is one interminable fiction—the historian's thirty-volume novel. And psychology the thinker's reminiscences, and as false, too, as any memoirs."

"But run over the other sciences in your mind—there is surely none other but Ethics, that considers the absolutely satisfactory."

"I must candidly say," replied Leonard, "that I do not think that of any importance. I at least have this notion in my mind; and I worship and pin my faith to it."

"*Idée fixe*," called out Maurice, with a laugh. "Now consider the following, if you please. If perfect happiness is not perfectly good, will it not contain evil?"

"Yes," he said, "I suppose that it will."

"And perfect happiness and the Good will be different?"

"They will."

"But is happiness evil?"

"I would not go so far as to say that."

"Perfect happiness is the same with the Good, then?" cried I.

"There are two of you," he warmly protested, "a double battle, as they say in the Latin. You attack me upon either flank." But he allowed the point with some hesitation.

"Let us contend single-handed," said I. "Maurice, I love to hear you talk. There is something in your voice, your very eyes, that wins attention. But you must stand aside just for the moment, until I am *hors de combat*, when you may come up to my rescue, as a friend should. And, Leonard, will you answer me a question? Now, you think that what is good will be also absolutely satisfying—you allow that? You would predicate not one, but both the properties together?"

"Yes, perhaps so," he said in reply.

"And nothing, in your judgement, will be absolutely good, that is not also absolutely satisfactory, and *per contra*?"

"Nothing, I suppose," he said slowly.

"Why not allow, then, that 'good' means 'absolutely satisfactory'?"

"They are two distinct notions—that is why."

"Do not rend me," said Maurice, "with your dialectical knife. I would rather not take part in the division than be myself divided. But how distinct and different—can you tell us?"

"Perhaps not. How do 'good' and 'pleasant' differ?"

"We will not talk of that for the present. It is a question of their meaning, their application. But consider the matter in this light."

"Yes, go on," cried Leonard rather fiercely. "*Experimentum in corpore vili.*"

"In asking," said Maurice, "what is good, shall we not be asking also what is absolutely satisfactory?"

"If you like."

"We shall be trying to find out the same thing, put the question in what manner you please?"

"Yes," he said.

"Is not one or other notion superfluous?"

"No, either will throw light upon the other."

"But the dark places of life are complicated by the discovery of this simple notion of 'good'."

"Yes, discovery may darken understanding —for a time."

"But it did not help us to find happiness in the least."

"Obstinate boys! You ruled it out."

"We did . . . to simplify."

"Let me tell you that I really think your progress very devious to the Good."

"No doubt, we are bad pilots of the argument," said I. "We have brought her into harbour, as it were; for we have settled, at least, what the Good is. The anchor, whereby to clench her, we have not yet discovered; for we don't yet know what the predicate 'good' means. But you told us we must first settle that."

"Yes, of course."

"We have found, then, the meaning of 'good'?"

"That is quite horrid of you," replied Leonard. "*I* did not say that."

"It is what you should have said," replied I.

The discussion now threatened to break down, when Maurice rallied us with a jest, saying Leonard must allow that, if universal

happiness was the Good, we should scarcely seek out either in the philosophic paradise.

"Till then leave me the notion. You rob me prematurely."

"However, not by violence," said Maurice. "And may the theft not prove as baneful as the fire, that was stolen from the gods of old time!"

"But our problem," said I, "is still, I fancy, unsolved."

"Indeed, *what* were you saying?" replied Leonard, who at this was again all attention. "Have we *all*, then, found the meaning of 'good'? But how very absurd that appears!"

"Not one but two meanings," said Maurice, "and which shall we take?"

Leonard rose from his seat and began to pace to and fro. Then in a speech of some length—we gave him his head, as they say—he recapitulated, with evident relish and much tautology, his doctrine of "good." He had, I suspect, made of late a special study of the naturalistic fallacy and conceived the idea of expounding it to whosoever would discuss with him an ethical problem. So I said, when he had come to an end: "You walk, like Elia, Seraphic Doctor. But, pray, did you take the fallacy to bed with you and refurbish it with the first blush of dawn?"

"The dead warrior sleeps on his shield."

"Admirably turned," replied Maurice. "The rapier no match for the shield.—But how would you decide what is good?"

"Being asked about this or that thing, I should endeavour to banish all else from my mind, and should say to myself, concentrating my attention, 'Do I really adjudge this to be good?'"

"But surely it would happen," answered Maurice, "that different men upon this same method would adjudge different things to be good?"

"Yes, indeed. It would require a vast practice and 'Heaven-sent moments for this skill,' like the gipsy-lore in Arnold's great poem."

"What is 'the secret of their art'? Would they not adjudge many different things to be good?"

"Well, the most and the best we could hope for would be to come to some ultimate agreement."

"Yes, and when? At the Day of Judgement?" queried Maurice. "For surely many have tried in the same manner to determine what is right and failed utterly? What a dangerous predicament we are in!"

"How 'two minds flow together'!" said I.

"My dear, good fellow—"

"I was on the point of asking," I continued, "why Leonard did not apply the same line of thought to 'right' also."

"But 'right' and 'good' differ," replied he.

"How do they differ? Suppose anyone to put forward this very contention, that you have just upheld, only substituting 'right' for 'good' throughout, what would be your answer, Leonard?"

"Why, that 'right' is not a simple but a complex notion."

"Yes! but is it?" answered Maurice. "For the sake of the argument, I will go so far as to grant you the complex doctrine of notions."

"'Right' and 'conducive to the good'—as I maintain—stand for one identical notion."

"You must tell that," said I, "to an Intuitionist of your school. He would scarcely agree with you, I fancy. But I think you said of 'good' that on inspection we discover an unique, simple notion in the mind."

"Exactly so," replied he, removing his glasses and looking severely with the naked eye. "For if a man will consider what he means, when he asks himself 'Is this or that good?', he

will very soon be conscious he is not asking whether it is pleasant or evolved or absolutely satisfactory, or has any one of all those other predicates so dear to the moral philosopher. I say that 'good' means 'good' and nothing else."

"Let us, then, suppose your Intuitionist to ask himself if this or that is right, and you to say, 'Are you asking if it conduces to the Good, my friend?' Would he not reply somewhat in this fashion: Leonard, there are without doubt those, who use these terms indifferently to mean a complex notion—John Stuart Mill and the Utilitarians, by way of example—but I myself am aware of a quite distinct and simple one, for which our English term 'right' is commonly used? That, I think, is the strain of the Intuitionist school; they contend that 'right' means 'right' and nothing else whatever. They are, I might say, the dogmatists in morals."

"They do vainly talk," said Leonard, "like all dogmatists. They are just the very ordinary people, who know everything and have nothing to say. I do not find a simple notion of 'right'."

"Nor we of 'good.' But cannot you see, if they find two simple notions, distinct and unrelated, what an *impasse* you have come to?"

Leonard thought that we parted company at this point. "Prove to him there were ever so

many notions, simple or complex, and that did not show there was no such simple notion of 'good.' To multiply was neither to destroy nor to identify."

"Quite so," said Maurice. "And I fear we must appeal to psychology, though I am not at all sanguine of winning you. But, by-the-bye, were we perfectly happy, we should never, I think, inquire into the Good."

"So you have told me already. The tobacco-jar, Lancelot, please!" After that I filled the pipe, which Maurice had given me but a few days before, for I was then twenty-eight. We consumed much tobacco that morning.

"Besides," continued Leonard sententiously, "you drove me out of Paradise last night with the flaming sword of Love in your hand."

"You contracted out," replied I.

"Then do I understand you to hold that the unsatisfactory nature of life is the efficient, the moving cause of all our ethical inquiries?"

"Yes, at bottom," replied Maurice. "Dissatisfaction is the mother of inquiry—of all philosophy. And if a man were to offer us some end, which involved us in disquiet and pain, and yet pronounce it 'unqualifiedly good,' do you think that we should ever acquiesce?" Leonard, however, remained silent.

"For my own part," said I, "I should answer 'It is not good,' 'It does not bring us satisfaction at the last.' I cannot conceive that, if we enjoyed perfect happiness, we should ever inquire into the Good, or, for that matter, into Beauty, Reality, or Truth."

"We shall not, then, in the long run, whether or not we have in our minds this simple notion, use 'good' in any other sense than that of 'absolutely satisfactory'?"

"How *very* amusing!" cried I. "Leonard's notion will go a-begging for a name, quite disowned, and will have lost half its glamour. For no one will adopt or employ it. . . ."

Leonard, stamping his foot upon the ground: "To hear you talk, one would think there is nothing in the metaphysician's doctrine of notions. Yet it is old enough, goodness knows! Of all the extraordinary notions!"

Maurice and I began to answer together, but he yielded most courteously to me. "Oh—I can tell you—the more I think," said I, "of the matter, the more I think that Maurice is right. Baseless theories last long: people are ever trying to find what is in them."

"*Arcades ambo*," cried Leonard, "*et cantare pares et respondere parati.* But, Lancelot—"

"Notions, concepts, ideas, call them what

you please," said I, "they are but fictions of thought. And this opinion about them would never have come into vogue save for the use of synonymous terms. Had all terms or names been regarded as absolutely distinct in the sense of not being interchangeable, so that no one was substituted for another, who would ever have conceived of a notion as distinct from the word, save in this sense that the word may be spoken aloud or written down, while at other times we say it to ourselves in the secret dialectic of the soul with herself?" Here I fancy that I caught Leonard murmuring:—

> As I walk'd by myself,
> I talk'd to myself,
> And myself said unto me.

"Yes, indeed," I continued, "it is because certain terms are said to be synonymous or mean the same thing, that most men have come to suppose by a process of abstraction that they refer to somewhat, single and unchanging, which is different from, albeit denoted by them, and so is called a notion. True, when I speak of a sensible object, a feeling, a sensation, or, again, a mental image, I can distinguish it from what is called its name; I can have the one without the other. Yes, these flower-beds and the creatures of the imagination—the rich ivy, that

grows upon the walls of the College court, where I kept in old days—the myriad-like pictures, that we summon up to be our companions in hours of solitude—the feeling of delight in the presence of a dear and near friend, the brilliant hues of day and the sombre hues of night: all these are quite distinct, are oft indeed unnamed. But I cannot in this manner distinguish a name from the idea or notion, that it is said to denote. In truth, if I have such a notion, I shall surely come across it at some time or other apart from the word; but I do not find that that is ever the case. Take away the name, and there is nothing. Hence the question: Does 'good' mean 'absolutely satisfactory,' 'desired,' 'evolved,' or whatever it may be? seems to resolve itself into the question: Am I prepared to substitute the one term for the other? And to say that divers terms denote the same notion seems to me nothing else than saying that in certain definite circumstances I use them indifferently. Men have been made so blind with the draught of logic as to multiply what they see. So are the difficulties of thought created and destroyed by thought itself."

When I had thus finished speaking, Leonard, who was whistling lightly, broke out: "'*Entia non sunt multiplicanda*'—'existences must not be multiplied'—is that your maxim, as we used

to say in Oxford out of the notes of our lectures?"

"'*Sine necessitate*'—'without necessity'—to complete the aphorism. For that is the point."

"So *that* is the ideal theory—and its end. Maurice and Lancelot will live together in philosophy, like Castor and Pollux, twin stars. . . . ."

"And Leonard will reign there also, a grim planet, a disturbing influence?"

"How can I help being revolutionary?" replied he, seeming confused. "After what you have told me just now, I cannot see why we should not use 'good' to mean—well, just anything, that we like. And, for my part, I intend turning Hedonist—how about that?" I thought that he spoke with some bitterness.

"What an evening mood you are in—quite perverse!"

"But then, if there is no such notion of 'good,' as I contend for—"

"We shall argue about the meanings, and we shall bring them to the test."

"Ah, yes!—but how?"

"Why?" said Maurice. "What are we doing this very moment but contending over one meaning of 'good'?"

I was for carrying the war straightway into the enemy's camp; so I said—"It is really your party, that will go about the world, making any propositions they may please about 'good,' predicating their simple notion quite at random. For listen, Leonard. Art and science and athleticism, the pleasures of the table, sensuous pleasure in all its forms, personal affections with their various and variously contrasted characteristics—yes, this brilliant sunshine, too!—all will have their eager champions, all their rivals and opponents. You will agree with that—will you not, Leonard? You remember Browning, your great hero—you remember that wonderful poem of old age:

> Now, who shall arbitrate?
> Ten men love what I hate,
> Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
> Ten, who in ears and eyes
> Match me: we all surmise,
> They this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul believe?"

"Matched, indeed? In the eyes of the soul, too?" retorted Leonard. "There is an eye of the soul, which perceives and declares the Good, what it is right for us to promote, what ought to be."

"Leonard, you are a perfect mine of notions, always opening a new vein. I cannot under-

stand your philosophy. I really do not know what you are."

"Say an Eclectic," replied he. "I am all for toleration—*nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri*, like the Roman poet of old."

"Does Eclecticism mean that any theory is good enough for one's opponents, and none for one's self? But, if all men have this eye, yet it perceives and declares different things in different men. Or are there some, who are destitute of this organ of sight, as at least I strongly suspect?"

Leonard put another match to his pipe, and pulling up his chair, composed himself to explain this new opinion, which, he said, was as old as the *Phaedo*. "Yes, there are, as I read. For such men are the morally blind, who have no perception of goodness, who have drunk so deeply of the primers of ethics as to have drowned their primitive instincts. Either they have never possessed this eye, or in them it has become atrophied by time or their previous manner of life, so that now they are quite incapacitated from beholding and declaring what is good. In the rest of mankind—so I read—this peculiar power may be discerned in all its various stages of growth and developement, of maturity, immaturity, and decay. In the child it may be seen in its

primitive and rudimentary form; at the other extreme, here and there, from time to time, arises a man of penetrating, wonderful vision. Such, I say, are the prophets, the reformers, the leaders of the world in its onward march; to such men are due progress, advance; they have a great power of intuition, of *θεωρία*, as the Greeks might have said." And there he stopped somewhat abruptly, for the want, perhaps, of a little more breath.

"How delightful it rings to the ear," replied Maurice, "but does it ring sound to the mind? How settle the claims of competing intuitions:

> Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
> Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind?

For it seems to me the prophets and leaders of the world have agreed even less among themselves than the mass of common men in their verdicts."

"But the eye of the soul," replied Leonard, "may be trained to ever finer discrimination."

"Indeed?" I said doubtfully. "And how?"

"By education, by all right reasoning, by philosophy, the sciences and arts, by experience of persons and of things."

"And which will be the finer discrimination? How like the three Grey Sisters in the legend of Perseus, who had but one eye between them!

Does the search for the Good begin in a garden with three philosophers and one eye? Come, lend it me, Leonard, a moment, that I may see a little withal. Or do we need a second mysterious sense?"

Leonard could find nothing for it but to say that I was flippant and to reassert his theory, which he did with much vigour but without insight into my question. "So this is the new disguise of the notion," I said. "How elusive you are! For we are back at the same old *impasse*. Unless we all saw that the same object was what ought to be, there would be no way of ending the disagreement."

"None save force," added Maurice, under his breath.

"Force never destroys," replied Leonard rather drily, "when ideas are the foe." And thereat we all broke into laughter.

"But," Maurice continued, "when you tell me that I ought to promote knowledge or pleasure or . . . whatever it may be, I cannot *really* see why, my dear Leonard."

"Because the eye of the soul reports that," answered he.

"Oh, the eye of the soul, if I have one, reports nothing of the kind. Just at present it reports that the eye of the soul is a metaphor."

"I see that it needs training," he replied. "But ought we not to promote even your Good?"

"I never use 'ought' of the Good."

"Then is universal happiness simply one idea, upon which a man may concentrate his mind?"

"Yes, for men have different purposes—this one that, and that another. Purposes are interests; and it is interest, that governs the world, though it is intellect, that must decide for us which shall rule. It is the primary factor of life; and, while moral philosophy is often said to have for its province activity, conduct, or pleasure and pain, it would be truer, I think, to say that it has to deal with interests—the theory of interests, to put it that way."

"They are conflicting," said Leonard, "and divergent."

"Yes, for life is a conflict tempered by compromise. But which shall we take of these various purposes?"

"Which, indeed?" I said eagerly. "For the conflict admits of no compromise—"

"Which but universal happiness? And which other shall we call the Good? It is the master-interest of the master-mind of man."

"How *can* you say that?" replied Leonard, with an arching of the head.

"Because its realisation will alone make us perfectly happy."

"Yes, that goes without saying," I interjected half-aside.

"But if a man should yet decline to promote it?" asked Leonard.

"There is nothing more to be said upon the subject. We cannot compel a man's interest —can we?"

"But I have something more to say of the Good," replied I. "For it would be, as I think, an explanation of life."

Leonard repeated the words after me, as though he fancied that my senses had taken leave of me. "What on earth do you mean?" cried he. "Can a theory—can any theory be that?"

"Well, possibly not a theory exactly. The explanation of life may be a life, that needs no explanation."

"My dear fellow," said Leonard, "it is the essence of an epigram to be simply too good to be true."

"Is that one?" said I. "How relentless! But I meant that all the unsatisfactory nature of our present life would be overcome,

transcended or abolished, and I cannot really think of any other way, in which it ever will be explained. That is to say, it would have passed beyond our ken. But life might have discoveries without secrets. There might, I mean, be new experiences—experiences we had not known—but none we did not understand."

"How charmingly you drop out your difficulties by the way! And now you are getting altogether beyond me. Would this ideal life be completely comprehensible?"

"Completely comprehensible. It would suggest no further questionings. Do you not, for instance, think that the more easy our relations with a friend, the greater the unreflecting pleasure, that we have in his presence, and the less, if I may say so, he 'gives us to think' about his motives, his character, his intellect, the more we may be said to understand him?"

"Oh, people are so many riddles," cried Leonard, "whose secrets we never discover. I expect them to do one thing; they are always doing another. I get on with them up to a point, indeed the more so, the less that I see of them. Very often it happens that the rarer and briefer the opportunities, that I have of conversing with my friends, the greater is the

pleasure I feel, when we meet. Perhaps we talk of current events, common topics; then the wheels of conversation run smoothly, for they traverse a familiar road. Delight and knowledge are in inverse ratio; the less that we try to know of other people, the better it is for our peace of mind. Think of the joyousness of the child, of the young! But did I see my friends from day to day—I am glad to say I do not—I should begin to criticise, to interrogate, to form conflicting conceptions of their nature."

"And then you would not understand them?" queried Maurice. "Yes, you are quite romantic, Leonard, but not really so uncompanionable."

"Only the shallow—you know—are transparent."

"But," said Maurice, "in the moments you allude to you would scarcely call your friends incomprehensible?" And as he spoke, he pressed his hand upon my knee, as he had a habit of doing, for he was sitting close beside me.

"Perhaps I have never had a friend," replied Leonard, "and am a lonely man, like Socrates, that strange creature, whom Xenophon misunderstood and Plato manufactured. But, Maurice, if our intercourse with others no longer 'gave us to think'—"

"Then the thought of understanding them would never occur."

"So the philosopher would perish? Gently, my friend! For wisdom begins in wonder, as the ancients have told us."

"Yes, the secret of life is the love, that passeth all understanding."

"Quite a new blessing," he cried, "but just listen to yonder skylark! The birds go into Heaven before the philosophers—

> With thy clear, keen joyance
> Languor cannot be:
> Shadow of annoyance
> Never came near thee:
> Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety."

The words had been running strangely in my head—"if life were like that as a whole"—and then it flashed upon my mind that we had found a single clue to the conduct of life. I ventured to say this was of great importance: we had predicated "good" not of many things but only of one. Long vistas of thought appeared on a sudden to open before me, and I fell into a musing mood.

But Leonard took refuge in jest: he was quite incorrigible. "Oh!" said he, "it was only the Iron Duke, who had 'the wit, which saw one

clue to life, and followed it'—Matthew Arnold in his sonnet, you recall."

Maurice took up the remark and answered: "We claim to have found in universal happiness a principle, whereby to organise the whole of life."

"'All things were together'," replied Leonard, "'and reason divided them.' Goodness gracious, why return to the primeval chaos? Life, I say, has more than one province—not morality only, but knowledge and art also. I think, for instance, artistic production and contemplation have nothing whatever to do with the Good. These three branches of life—there are others, perhaps, also—are co-equal and independent, and together they make up, as some men call it, the Higher Life. An ethical ideal has no right to dictate to knowledge and art."

"Perhaps not. You mean an ideal of some sphere, some portion of life. But then—why look at life piecemeal?"

"So there may be room for art in the Good? I remember seeing it somewhere said that we might expect music in Heaven—though not, I hope, to the tune of psalm-singing."

"Ah, there you have me. I cannot conjecture. Music and Heaven imply harmony, at least! But don't let us fit our idea of another

life simply to our fancies of this. Someone in Plato amusingly speaks of 'an eternal carouse,' and the mediæval artist looked for battlemented streets, where R. L. Stevenson would demand a pound of tobacco and Shylock, very possibly, a pound of flesh."

Leonard returned to the attack with the suggestion that we should really be depressing art, for which in the abstract he had an especial regard, in the name of the Good.

"Far be it from us," said Maurice, "when we have so little of it in so many forms!"

"Oh, but by all the Muses," cried Leonard, "'tis the artist's, the creator's right to express himself in what ways he will, to construct all beautiful forms and figures, all lovely sounds at his leisure, untrammelled by extraneous considerations, unimpeded, unconstrained by external and other laws. And that is what I mean by his independence—the right to express himself freely."

"Yes, but by ourselves," replied Maurice, "and by all, that is philosophic, why beg the whole question? You tell us 'the artist has a right' or 'it is right,' in other words, 'for the artist to express himself' in external form, regardless of other laws than the so-called laws of his own proper art. But that, I think, is the

point at issue. Do not let us consider now whether we shall or shall not allow him. But what I mean is that we cannot solve that question in any other way than by reference to the Good."

"High protector of art," I said, "if men have your simple notion, might it not attach itself to art in their minds?"

"And I am afraid you must certainly hold," said Maurice, "that it attaches to philosophic research!"

This point Leonard evaded. He contended that art was neither moral nor immoral, and the manifestations of artistic genius could only be stunted and warped by the introduction of what were called "ethical considerations."

"But let us suppose a man to ask," replied Maurice, "of a certain class of pictures or plays: Shall we cultivate a feeling of pleasure in them in ourselves or others or receive their suggestions and allow them to permeate our souls? Or suppose, again, the artist himself to be confronted with a problem in the very pursuit of his art. He is possessed—let us say—of some strange, some wonderful idea, and his mind is filled with the thought of expressing it, perhaps upon the canvas in all the plenitude of shape and colour. But someone may tell him that

this work, which he has it in mind to evolve, will have some pernicious effect upon the nature of the men, who will hereafter gaze upon it and be moved by the power of his brush, that has welded together those so delightful colours. What manner of answer, Leonard, do you fancy that he would give?"

"Ah! he would go upon his way, just ignoring the suggestion—quite at ease at his easel. Forgive the pun."

"Being so much absorbed in his subject—*totus in illis?* But you claim independence for the artist. Then why not for the statesman, the man of affairs?"

"Or the gambler and the thief?" I interjected. "Your division is an expression of your interest."

But Leonard's interest in art was on this occasion somewhat evanescent. "Have you one ideal and one only of the conduct of all life?"

"Yes, of all life," answered Maurice. "How else can we find an answer to our problems, wherein we may rest content?"

"I dislike the people, who have only one idea. They are so very simple and stupid."

"Simplicity," replied I, "is the very note of greatness. Not all simplicity. It depends on the idea. It is those, who are dominated by

the trivial, who are really the bores and the fools."

Leonard quoted the familiar words of *In Memoriam*—

> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves.

"Well, I am not sure it does," replied I. But he said that all things worked together for Good.

"I should be so glad to think that. But I really do not see they are working for *our* Good. Am I? Are you? I wonder, Leonard."

"Most assuredly," he argued; "it is not always easy to see how, for we know so very little of the world as a whole, of the factors and forces, that are moulding and driving it on. But perhaps we may by seeking find them out, for things are ever moving towards their appointed end, though some men would gladly allow that they know not the nature of the goal. It is enough that they know it is the Good."

"I wonder what it is—what it really is," said Maurice.

"Oh, universal happiness, if you like. At least our Master of Life and Love says so."

"Would you say that it is purposed by a mind?"

"Perhaps it is. How many things are con-

trived for a purpose in the universe! They have each their final cause, their end, their proper good. A thing's end—so says Plato—is its function or its work, namely, that, which it alone can do or can do better than anything else. And I say with Aristotle that 'Nature does nothing in vain.' In like manner, may not everything, that is, be designed for one purpose and one end?"

"My dear Leonard, a manufactured article may have an end in that sense. But men are never man-made. We are not pruning-knives, you know, to take Plato's illustration—at least, I mean, we are not literal ones."

"Ah, we often declare," said I rather flippantly, "that 'two people are made for one another,' though, as a rule, we are perfectly wrong. They end so often by 'cutting' one another.

"Are you talking of love?" replied Leonard. "But let me read you a few lines from the poem you lately cited against me." Then, on searching his pockets, he failed to discover the text, which he had a habit of carrying about with him.

"Well," said Maurice, "and what does he say?" espying the book in the grass; for he was standing behind Leonard's chair and was leaning over and playfully ruffling the hair on his brow, which attention he took very indifferently. "Here it is—quite close to your feet!

All great scholars are so very untidy!" And picking up the book and chancing to open on the fly-leaf, "Hullo!" he cried, "'Best love from ——,' what does this mean?" Leonard seized it with a good deal of vigour and began confusedly turning over the pages, until coming upon the familiar lines he read out as follows in a hard tone and with some interpolations by the way to explain the text—

> He fixed thee mid this dance
> Of plastic circumstance,
> This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
> Machinery just meant
> To give thy soul its bent,
> Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

"I am not in the least impressed, my dear fellow," replied I. "Browning was there on more difficult ground. And, as for the Greeks, do you think they had in mind the definite design of a conscious person, when they passed beyond the many creations of the fine and the useful arts? Modern fiction, not ancient philosophy!"

Upon a little reflection he answered, "We will not dispute further of design in that sense. For, after all, whether things have been designed or are simply tending to realise the Good makes no difference."

"There is often," replied Maurice, "nothing so relevant as a digression. But you are going back to old Greek views. And I cannot allow that man's end in the Platonic sense is perfect happiness. For how often he never approaches it at all! How often over long years is he made bitter by the burden of sorrow or with physical pain crippled and weighed down!"

"And the sequel," inquired Leonard, "is the life of man 'nasty, brutish, short,' as old Hobbes of Malmesbury and the many pipes says?"

"Softly," I answered. "You must not ascribe *that* to us. Hobbes lived in a very wild time, such as we, thank Heaven, are spared from. But the end or the function of a thing is now interpreted to mean whatsoever it subserves, as the eyelash the protection of the eye. It is no longer thought of as created to protect it. Will you define the function of man in that sense?"

"Oh, the preservation of the race, I should fancy."

"Or the maintenance of philosophy?" cried I, recalling the talk of the previous evening. "That is the dictum of your Arabian Aristarchus upon Aristotle, who said that the state existed for the production of a few philosophers."

"But, jesting quite apart," replied Leonard, "I like to think that things are moving by a necessary law to their inevitable end. What is it, that you offer me instead? A universe, that is travelling . . well, Heaven knows whither.'

"I admire your wit," I said, "but inevitable and necessary, indeed! People often say a war is inevitable. And what is it they mean? That the parties concerned are intent upon it or events, as they fancy, will terminate in some terrible conflict."

"So, in a word, we do not know to what end things are tending?"

I said that I, for one, did not care to prophesy, "for who was unaware, in the political world, for example, how prophecy was ever being falsified, though it looked only a few years ahead? We could idealise; we could not prophesy. So I really could not conjecture the state of the human republic on this earth or another at some far more distant date."

Leonard earnestly repudiated this attitude. "Believe me," cried he, "you are wanting in faith, you are wanting in faith. I say that the world makes progress 'in the mass'; I say that individuals are progressing here—and elsewhere, it may be. Surely there have been great advances in morality, achieved once for all by

the race? We do not, for instance, return to the old organisation of society upon a basis of slavery."

"We have something very like it," cried Maurice. "Your doctrine is very cheerful; perhaps, indeed, what you say is the case, and 'all's right with the world.' It gives one such a sense of security—whatever one does makes no ultimate difference, for it tends to the Good in the long run and somehow. And yet how it is so I cannot see. For we are walking ever in twilight, and the sunrise is not yet nor the pageant of the perfect."

"A sort of twilight of the gods, I do maintain, if man disposes!"

"But have you noticed," continued Maurice, "how people are most disposed to this fashion in teleology, when least the nature of events bears it out, when there is bitterness in the heart, when they are in sorrow or bewilderment, and see little they call 'good' in what befalls them?"

"But a theory is none the worse," replied he, "for the being cheerful."

"Perhaps not, but is it reasonable?" I said. "Does experience confirm and bear it out? It may be we are nearer to the Good than Athens in the golden age of Pericles. But is it so?"

"History will prove anything. What is it, I

say, but the prejudice of the writer? For the historian does not write but rewrite history—he is always telling us so, is he not? The true story of the past is a variable quantity. Do not let us go to that. But have we men no final cause? Your Good, for instance?"

"Yes, if it is our purpose. Not otherwise. That is all."

"Then, can we never attain to your Good? That would be pessimism indeed."

"Yes, the only really terrible form."

"Perhaps you would say that all men long for happiness?"

"I used to think so," I said, "in old Oxford days. When we hear a thing frequently, we may take it for granted. But Maurice has since taught me to doubt it, though, perhaps, it can be subtly defended in one sense or another of the phrase."

"But consider what it is, that we mean by desire. The idea of an object or event comes into the mind and calls forth a feeling of pleasure: it is, in fact, as our philosophers remark, a 'pleasant thought.' And this, in turn, produces a state of uneasiness, of dissatisfaction, if it be not immediately realised; and the tension remains until the achievement of the object or a change in our attitude towards it."

"Carlyle," replied I, "had an extreme detestation of happiness. And did not you, too, last night find it very dull and tiresome?"

"How do you escape the charge of pessimism, then?"

"I am, indeed, not a pessimist," replied I. "Optimism is unverified; pessimism unverifiable. There are also many kinds of pessimism. For sometimes it is a mood, and sometimes it is a pose. It is physical in its basis, or it comes of knowing too little. The ignorant mind alone is absolutely secure and free from care; and its security is ever being destroyed. Yet, again, it is the refuge of the destitute of ideals. No, Leonard; 'May the Good prevail!' wrote the old Greek tragedian, and sang the ancient Hellenic chorus; but whether it will do so or not, who can say? But, at least, let us try to realise it; for by man will it be realised, if at all. Man purposes; man creates. He makes life for an expression of himself; and art and philosophy anticipate nature and may fashion experience anew for his delight. Yes, the ideal calls to us, to vigorous human effort; it claims our devotion and our enthusiastic assistance. Let us lend a hand in the struggle, where we may; let us try to build up this unseen, this wonderful life of love."

And as I said this, I was aware of certain butterflies, bright-winged, many-coloured, that were chasing one another above my head—faint symbols of the life and death of man.

"And *how* shall we build it?" answered Leonard after a pause. "Where are the stones, that we may place them one upon another in succession? For the end of ethical reasoning has brought us to the beginning once more. You have told me—have you not?—that the *via prima salutis*, the first glimpse of safety, for the moral philosopher will be opened by identifying 'good' with 'absolutely satisfactory'?"

"Yes," I said.

"And universal happiness with the Good?" I assented.

"And the Good—the *vera vita*, the true life—consists primarily in the perfect love of persons?"

"Capital!" cried Maurice enthusiastically.

"What an expression it all seems," replied Leonard, "of your own personalities, as though it came from the very passion of your hearts! Perhaps it did. And how strange! You are as emotional as intellectual. And yet there may be something in it. But what, I ask, ought we to do—I mean, where lie the golden stairs to Heaven?"

"Ah! that is labour for your study," replied

I. "Life, indeed, needs organising; yet everything save life is organised. What a gift you have the power to bestow upon a purblind, ignorant race of men for one so wedded to philosophy of old! I see issuing from your cloister a treatise on the matter, replete with all that erudition we cannot take away. Perhaps, too, you would render to the common opinions of mankind some rational justification, of which they ever stand in need, when they are brought one and all to the criterion of philosophy and of love."

"Let us leave the matter there. Some fine day we may return to it—not now. For the present let us close the gates of argument. See! the charm of intercourse is the agreement of opposites, as the dear old Dean used to say; for we have disproved the ancient proverb 'Two's company, three's none'."

"Stay a little; do not go," replied Maurice. "Let me tell you first a story, an old and simple story, that I shaped in my mind long ago, and such as anyone might fashion for himself. It ran in outline somewhat as follows, but the details I do not now remember." (He proceeded in a slow and grave manner.) "There were once three young men of a like age, who from their earliest boyhood had dwelt in the same city, but

as yet they were unknown to one another. They were peers in intellect and character and lovers of like pursuits. But one day by chance they came together upon a journey to a place afar off. They knew not the distance they must travel; but they had heard that it was perilous and would take them a great while to compass—some, indeed, said more than a lifetime, as though to dissuade them from embarking upon it. But they smiled in the gladness of their youth, for the time was spring-time. So they conversed together of their purpose, as young men may, and spoke of their spiritual aspirations with confidence unblushingly. Thus it was that, as they proceeded on their journey, they grew to know much of one another; and at times a great happiness came over them, till with singing they shortened the way, like soldiers on an arduous march. When they had need of labour for nurture or progress, they divided it among them; when they came to pleasant places upon the road, they were glad together. And there were others, whom they cheered, as here and there they halted upon the path. But ever and anon they lost the road and would make small progress; for darkness came upon them unawares, or, as it happened, some broad by-path by its pleasantness or the track of many feet

lured them away. Then only by retracing their steps or by long circuitous routes could they return into the road. Sometimes, moreover, they were much grieved by what befell them or the others, whom they chanced upon; but their sorrows were made sweet by their sympathy, and by their progress made things of the past. Now, when they had thus travelled very many days and had done many things together and had not been for long all that while out of one another's sight, there happened a great mystery. For one of them fell ill and departed and was no more seen of them. But the two, that remained, knew not how nor whither he had gone. And therefrom came a wondrous effect upon them. So for a time they sojourned in one place, overcome with a terrible grief. And, when again they set forth upon the road, they recalled daily, as they journeyed, the presence of their friend, and all that he had told them, or carved his name upon the bloom of the hyacinth or the bark of the trees, as they passed, in the words and cadence of song. Thereafter they two clung the more to one another. So many days went by. But at length one morning, in a place, where they had rested for the night, one of these two also was found to have departed, even as the first. And the third was left alone

and cheerless, for now he knew his isolation and for days was inconsolable. To some, that he met in the way, he told of his love and received of them fair or hard words, according as they understood or not. And they, that understood, were few in number. But grief departed not, and he went heavily with leaden feet. One night he, too, lay down, as was his custom, and fell asleep, musing upon the companions, whom he had so dearly loved, so strangely lost. And, when he woke again (I do not know exactly how long afterwards it was), he was travelling once more in their company, whom he had known before in love. And they were changed in some respect, but he knew them. And the way seemed another way, yet like the old way but more beautiful with many colours and rich gold. There were some, who travelled ahead; while some they greeted and passed, as they went. Yet others were tending in the same direction, and from time to time they had converse with them. Ever the way, through which they passed, became to them more lovely. They had the more delight one of another; and rarer and fainter grew the shadows and the difficulties in the path, for they had clearer perception of their course, and it seemed that a flame burned ever before them and led them on. And now they were separated

no longer one from another, and the bitterness of their former partings faded out of their minds for love's sake. Whereas before they had lingered upon the past, now they reverted to it ever the more rarely, though with gladness, for they were the more absorbed in new experiences and the delight of intercourse renewed. As others passed to and fro, they had brief speech of them, soul after soul, or pointed out the way or joined them for a while. Thus an increasing zest bore them ever more speedily on; flame-like flowers sprang at their feet; the way was lighter and the more easy of passage, the further they went, as if they trod upon lilies or on violets, and it was even as they had taken on them wings of imperishable youth and were purified of pain, until at length they came out from the broadening pathway they had traversed hand in hand upon what seemed an island of gold. And the deep but narrow water, that lay between them and the isle, parted momently; and, when they had gone over, flowed again into its course in such wise (though they knew it not), that none could return over, if he willed. But they looked not behind. For to the mind of the beholder all, that lay before them, appeared most fair and gracious, and harmonious sights and sounds filled eye and ear. A great multitude seemed

gathering there in companies. And when they beheld them, they said that all paths converged thither; and they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. They forgot all, that had happened to them in the aforetime; and no longer did they ask any questions. Only they knew one another and their happiness, and they looked with dazzling countenances upon one another in their blessedness."

"Let us go in; the sun is powerful," said I. "But, Maurice, what did you call your story?"

"It was nameless," he said.

"Let us call it," I replied with my arm in his, "'the Fulfilment, the Consummation of Love.' For the straws of their past made the bricks of their paradise, and man was heir to the mansions of Heaven."

This was the end of our conversation that day, Leonard declaring after lunch that he had many letters to write, for indeed they were long overdue. So he went his way; and it was not long after that time that we heard with not a little surprise and amusement that he was now become engaged to be married. So he settled down into a comfortable family man, as the phrase goes, and ceased any longer to contribute regularly to the philosophical journals. But henceforth in all love Maurice and I became

ever more intimate in the understanding one of another and the union of soul with soul. For the Good was as sweetness in the mind, and we thought we had knowledge of the Beatific Vision.

LOVE AND LIFE.

I.

Here in this garden thou and I reclined
In murmurous ease may exercise the mind
  On love (we love) and friendship (we are friends),
Rare moments in the range of humankind.

Calm the descent of this delightful day,
Calm the night's onset in the fall of May;
  What cast of circumstance could so conspire
To waive the guilty load of grief away?

The silver lightnings of the sunset shine
O'er Magdalen's pinnacle and that proud line
  Of heavenly spires, that close with heavenly
      courts
The last metropolis, that looms divine.

Too fugitive, my friend! Pain oft instals
Herself within the soul's four widowed walls,
  But yet anon lets in a purer light,
And to pursuit of joyous living calls.

II.

Come, let me lay my hand upon thy knee,
And hold thy mind awhile in willing fee,
  And tell some story of the mind of man
In service of divine philosophy.

Long the sage Doctors of the soul have sought
The Summum Bonum and too darkly taught
  Their curious musings to incurious men,
And each sect fiercely with the others fought.

Great wits and princely passions idly spent,
That compassed not the close of argument!
  Unblest and fiery and contention-tost,
None e'er gained aught like general consent.

How could the world's inquest be understood,
And how the way be clear-cut through the wood
  In wonted wise? They never stayed to ask:
How render first and last that regal "good"?

Or here and there a rendering stood implied,
As soon to be implicitly denied;
  Some construed "pleasant," and some "late-evolved,"
But the plain point was ever put aside.

III.

Many the senses sage men of the past
Gave to their "good"—but we? We must hold fast
  Unto the primal promise of debate
And say: Shall we use "good" so at the last?

Some held that "good" meant "good" and nothing
    more,
Vain thesis men may vainly trifle o'er.
  How know that aught is good at all, were that
The lonely key, that opes the lonely door?

Some would proclaim the pleasures of the soul,
Some the boon pleasures of the barren bowl,
  And far-off days from future days dissent:
What master should that vast debate control?

And some, too, fancied to round off the whole
Great argument, and win to wisdom's goal
  By metaphorical expedient,
And with an eye—new sense—endowed the soul.

Long ages since that tale did Plato tell,
How his great master Socrates so well
  Spoke of an eye in simile, what time
He drank the deadly chalice in the cell.

What though we have this vision, I and you,
Vain the contention, that must needs ensue:
For you pronounce this thing good, and I that,—
Which eye, or yours or mine, discerns more true?

One whispers: "'Twill be trained to see aright;
Turned with new lustre to the living light,
Though some are blind and in a dark cave dwell."—
But still I ask: And which the clearer sight?

And therefore whosoever did adjourn
Unto the philosophic schools to learn
The perfect Good, procured this poor reply:
'Tis this and that and everything in turn.

Nay, would ye close the immemorial quest,
With lucent meaning ye must first invest
Your "good"—that all-victorious predicate—
That so ye prove what else were purely guessed.

Hence, would ye have the matter well discussed,
First, first upon this doubtful count ye must
Consent: or else your fine-spun musings may
As well be mingled with the finer dust.

IV.

So, Masters of the mind, to simplify
The great inquest, by "good" I signify
  Having such note of pleasure passing rich,
That all dissatisfaction needs must die.

Can such joy be, ye wonder? For a trice
Ponder thereon, for ye have proved it twice
  Or thrice well-nigh these many years: let those
Strange moments darkly for a type suffice.

Too rare, too rare! And yet not all unknown,
As little balm upon much bitter strown,
  Or nectarous draught, dear opiate of pain—
One healing hour, and they're consumed and gone!

Still, still remember that they once have been;
And if ye know not all the Good may mean,
  Yet would I count them for a clear foretaste
And the sole evidence of things unseen.

So some light stream first leaps adown the side
Of its grim cradling hill, and far and wide
  Is seen to sparkle in its lovely youth,
But afterward moves soiled and sorely tried;

Yet here and there recalls its lusty speed,
And clears its course of river-sand and reed,
  Glitters translucent in the summer sun,
And blithely babbles to the morning mead.

But should ye say that pleasure unto pain
Is sister twin, and hand in hand the twain
  Dance to life's strain, and life is out of tune,
Your oft-told tale of happiness is vain!

What oft men call by that great name belies
The very word, a paltry compromise,
  A piebald thing of pleasure and of pain;
Some finer archetype is our surmise.

Ah, deep despair were yours, too soon confest;
Ah, wherefore lightly nurse the aspick, lest
  The bounteous years refute your churlish doom,
Or hold the worst till ye have proved the best?

V.

Were true felicity for ever rife,
Then void of meaning were this mental strife;
  For how discriminate 'twixt good and ill,
When gladness foamed the golden glass of life?

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I hold that, were it ever day and night
Fell never on man's soul to slay delight
  And fold the wings of the heart in darkness round,
We should not o'er the soul of goodness fight.

Ah me! what moves the mind of man intent
The cloisters of reflection to frequent
  And dream a beatific vision, save
The recurrent riddle of his discontent?

VI.

Perfection, too? And would ye further press
The question? Let me once again confess
  The Good is all the lives, that are lived so
Unceasing, and is all men's happiness.

"Vain words, alas," ye say. "Where seek and prove
The joy, that never on this planet throve?"
  In constant union of men consonant
And all the commerce of the larger love.

Listen to-night to that celestial love,
That doth in pale of personalty move,
  And holds apart to bring for ever near,
All passions of the sensual soul above.

Is ours the bliss, that these bold themes portend,
Of promise and fruition without end,
  Not only this or that man's prize? Why then,
We cannot die nor into death descend.

Man must outlive the dust, that seals the grave,
And in some finer land of living save
  A memory of the past; to you and me
Scarce on this planet fate perfection gave.

Were the brow circled with the crown of pain,
How life's sufficient coronal attain?
  Nay, each soul must, that would with ours consort,
Come in rapt pleasure and so pass again.

If haply ye shall set your heart upon
Joy splendid, yet strive not for that alone:
  One drooping soul may pluck you by the stem—
And then the bloom of happiness is gone.

Suppose that some last shadow over one
Of all the living lingers: and anon
  I think that he may bring a jarring note,
And your once dazzling bliss break in upon.

Out of the darkness this one thing reads plain:
Live for yourselves alone and live in vain.
Not so ye fortify your fev'rous souls,
Nor yet annihilate another's pain.

VII.

And now to perfect happiness attend.
Does aught of evil in its nature blend?
If not, 'tis good completely; or if not,
And still ye say 'tis evil, there's an end.

Or happiness, 'tis said, men all desire,
And to that bourn of being all aspire:
But oft I doubt if some men ever set
So lofty music to their lowly lyre.

Yet call ye "good" (perchance without a sigh,
Perchance with joy or reckless of reply)
That, which ye may not prove or prove in pain:
A battered world will blandly answer: Why?

So must ye, scholars, choose between the twain,
Your perfect Good and pleasure without stain.
Mark that ye cannot have it in both ways;
Ye may talk on, but talk, I trow, in vain.

No, no, the absolute Good is one indeed
With all men's happiness. What, then, the need
To rack the soul with questionings, that so
Their reconciliation we may speed?

VIII.

But thou, my friend, whose clearer thinking throws
A cast into the future, which way flows
The full tide of the fateful universe:
To thee I can but make reply: Who knows?

They say that all experiences flow
On to the Good by channels sure and slow:
Absent thee from debate, if that be true—
But *our* Good? Nay, I wish that it were so.

I would that it were so; and yet—and yet—
See fact and fancy in disunion met.
Consider thee and me awhile, and then
How shall we say that way the tide is set?

Wouldst thou believe in all we boast to do
Our vision on the goal is fixéd so,
And ever with consummate aim we strive
Its consummation to achieve? Ah, no!

IX.

And yet I count the world no closéd book,
Whereinto living eyes perchance may look
And there envisage the end of all midway,
As though man's writing it could scarcely brook.

Some, too, the world to a great clock compare,
That was set once and with no other care
Marks with a dull monotony the hours:
But the one maker and the key—are where?

Nay, Doctors, often taken unaware,
We observe it fallen out of all repair:
Then man remakes it to another time,
And a new chime the artificers prepare.

X.

Ah, still upon the zest of life lay hold,
Strive in some corner of the earth to mould
The marvel of man's absolute delight:
That ye can do—and leave the rest untold.

If life is plastic and itself will lend
Unto man's best adventure, ye may bend
And mould it to your heavenly hand. Strive on,
For ever strive.—*Write "Finis" at the end.*

What lies before us—that, which we shall be—
No human eyes with insight sure may see:
  But wide the prospect, that invades the soul,
If man be master of his destiny.

For whosoever onward bravely bears
May pass unconquered thro' the perilous years,
  Master, yet mendicant of love: lo, then
The trophy of Titanic life he wears.

Yes, there are those, who one to another mate,
Essential and cognate and passionate:
  Parted, they pine to meet and greet again;
Nor their dull grief is else determinate.

The master plays with Phaedo's golden hair;
Young Dante in the paradisal air
  Conceits to meet in marvellous converse
His Beatrice of the soul surpassing fair.

For him, who perished ere his perfect time,
His friend upbuilds the long pathetic rhyme,
  And finds him ever in his earthly course
And finds him once more in the heavenly clime.

So thou, fare on, all fainting fears above,
Ah, dearest! till we both together prove,
I with thee, all the pageant of the blest,
And that perennial prime of perfect love.

THE END.

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